



Borough of Chepping Wycombe.

To His Worship the Mayor, the Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of High Wycombe.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you my Annual Report on the health and Sanitary conditions of the Borough of Chepping Wycombe.

The period embraced is from January 1st to December 31st, 1918, and to carry out the suggestions made by the Local Government Board, the report will be brief, giving the vital statistics for the year, so that the records of the district may be continuous, with only a short account of any outbreaks of disease and other prominent sanitary events of the year.

At the request of the Board, the Influenza Epidemic of 1918, and measures taken in connection with it, will be dealt with in more detail.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.

The following classified statement of inspections made during the year by your Sanitary Inspector, has been given in accordance with the requirements of the L.G. Board.

Inspections of Dwelling Houses (including under Housing Acts)	1461
„ Schools	30
„ Factories and Workshops	216
„ Bakehouses	23
„ Dairies and Cowsheds	49
„ Ice Cream Premises	12
„ Slaughter Houses	298
„ Offensive Trades	7
„ Common Lodging Houses	7
„ Fried Fish Shops	29
„ Tents, Vans and Sheds	11

This list makes a total of 2,143 inspections, and indicates a considerable amount and variety of sanitary work.

As a result of these inspections, the following notices were served:—

No. of Statutory Notices served during 1918	49
No. of informal Notices and letters...	419

There are 233 Factories and Workshops on the register.

There were 216 Inspections of such premises—12 defects were discovered, and they were all remedied.

Food Supply.

Of 45 samples taken for analysis, 30 were genuine, and of the remaining 15, which were either inferior or adulterated, 14 were of milk.

More than half the specimens of milk taken for analysis were either inferior or adulterated. With so much depending upon a pure and wholesome milk supply this is a matter deserving your serious attention.

Meat Inspections.

Carcases (Beasts, Sheep, Pigs)	852
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Housing.

Since my last report the problem has become even more acute than it was then, as practically nothing has been done in the way of building new houses. With an estimated population of over 22,000, and less than 5,000 houses—many of which, though large, have only two or three occupants (with servants), there must necessarily be very considerable overcrowding in the poorer districts, with the smaller houses, in fact, many such houses contain two, and sometimes three families with children. From personal observation I am inclined to consider the population rather under, than overestimated.

As this overcrowding will tend to increase, rather than decrease, it is very desirable that a Housing Scheme should be adopted, and building commenced without delay.

Births.

Estimated population 22,897.

Total number of births 372, a rate of 16.24 per 1,000 population.

England and Wales a rate of 17.7 per 1,000 population.

Total number of births notified 282, or a rate of 78.80% of total births.

The illegitimate births number 31, or 8.33 of the total births, or more than 2½ times as many as in 1917.

Maternity and Babies' Welfare Centre.

This work is being very energetically carried out, on similar, but more advanced lines than indicated in last year's report.

The following is extracted from the Nurse's Annual Report:—

Total number of visits to children	...	...	...	...	2583
Total number of Births	...	...	...	...	372
Total number of Birth Notifications received	...	...	...	...	282
Total number of Babies attending Clinic	...	...	...	...	601

Deaths.

Estimated population for death rate supplied by the Registrar General, 20,436.

Total number of deaths registered 305, making a rate of 14.92 per 1,000.

Rate for England and Wales 17.6 per 1,000.

Deaths in hospital or other institutions 25, or 8.33 per cent. of total deaths.

Number of Inquests 12, a percentage of total deaths 3.93.

Number of certified deaths 295, a percentage of total deaths 96.72

Number of uncertified deaths 10, a percentage of total deaths 3.27.

The following is the rate per 1,000 population from the causes mentioned:—

Measles	...	...	...	...	...	...(rate per 1,000)	.04
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	" "	.08
Pulmonary Tuberculosis			...	...	...	" "	1.37
Other Tuberculous Diseases			...	...	...	" "	.44
Cancer and other Malignant Disease...			...	...	...	" "	1.32
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	" "	.16
Violence	...	...	...	...	...	" "	.20

Diarrhœa and Enteritis under two years caused 4 deaths, or a rate of 10.75 per 1,000 births.

Total deaths under one year, 27, or a rate of 72.31 per 1000 births. This rate I consider to be unnecessarily high, even though the rate in towns of similar size is higher.

Influenza.

Total deaths 64. Death rate per 1,000 population 3.13.

This epidemic first made its appearance in High Wycombe and the neighbourhood in June, and lasted then about two months, during which time no deaths from this disease were registered, though there were very many cases, including a large number of the soldiers who were at that time in the camps at Loakes Park and Daws Hill.

In October a fresh outbreak occurred, which epidemic lasted about three months.

The first death from Influenza was registered on October 22nd. The earlier attack appeared to commence in the military camps, and to select the strongest individual. The civil population did not appear to be stricken in the same proportion as the military, but in a lessened degree. In the later epidemic the conditions were reversed; the type was much more severe, complications more frequent, and the civil population was chiefly affected. A former attack conferred a definite degree of immunity, second attacks being rare. The incubation period appeared to be from one to three days, and the duration of the infectivity from ten to fourteen days. The expired breath, and the fine spray produced by coughing and sneezing appeared to be the means by which the disease was spread. A noteworthy fact was that the occurrence of profuse hæmorrhage (chiefly nasal) much lessened the likelihood of more serious and fatal complications. Young adults were chiefly attacked, and the mortality returns show a definite increase in each of the first three decades of life; from 30 to 50 showing a marked decline.

The only preventive steps taken were to close some of the Sunday Schools and to restrict the hours of performance in the Cinematograph houses, allowing an interval between the performances of 30 minutes for air disinfection.

The following table shows the ages most severely affected, and also the sex incidence:—

Ages 0-10 years		10-20 years	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	Over 50 years
11		14	18	8	5	8
Males	4	5	8	4	3	3
Females	7	9	10	4	2	5

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

G. D. KING BANNERMAN,

Acting Medical Officer of Health.

